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ABSTRACT

These program guidelines provide a list of the essential elements which make for a quality occupational education special needs delivery system. Among the topics listed in the guidelines are: (1) six sources of laws and regulations which direct and regulate services to special needs populations; (2) definition of the four distinct populations served through the special needs program which include the academically and economically disadvantaged, the handicapped, and the limited English proficiency students; (3) qualifications of program staff members and the opportunity for staff development; (4) student-teacher ratio; (5) facilities and equipment; (6) need for a board policy; (7) student referral procedure; (8) student needs assessment; (9) individualized occupational training plans and educational plans; (10) student placement; and (11) student evaluation. (JW)

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WYOMING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SPECIAL NEEDS

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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Introduction

The intent of the Program Guidelines is to provide a list of essential elements which make for a quality Occupational Education Special Needs Delivery System.

The special needs services are not specific to occupational education program content but relate to providing supplemental services for special populations receiving occuptional training.

Occupational education programs include all activities funded through the vocational education section of the Wyoming Foundation Program or the federal law PL 94-482. The following are guidelines that all special needs programs should strive to meet.

I. **An Occupational Special Needs Program Must Comply With Current Laws and Regulations governing services to special needs students.**

There are six sources of law and regulations which direct and regulate services to special needs populations.

1) State Board Policy Rules and Regulations
2) Public Law 94-482 Vocational Education Act
3) Public Law 94-142 Special Education Act
4) Public Law 93-112 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
5) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
6) Title IX of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Law

II. An Occupational Special Needs Program Will Serve A Specifically Defined Population of Students, Grades 7-12.

The four distinct populations to be served through special needs programs are: 1) academically disadvantaged, 2) econcomically disadvantaged, 3) handicapped and/or 4) limited English proficiency students.

1) Academically disadvantaged persons lack reading, writing and/or math skills and they perform two or more grades below their age level.

2) Economically disadvantaged persons come from families with incomes below the traditional poverty level, where wage earners are unemployed or on public assistance. Economically disadvantaged persons can be identified using school lunch criteria or other appropriate criteria as stated in school policy.

Population

3) Handicapped persons are those individuals identified as handicapped by the school's special education child study committee.

4) Limited English proficient students are those individuals which generally come from home environments in which English is not the common language of communication and the lack of English language skills is a barrier to their learning.

III. **An Occupational Special Needs Program Will Have Appropriately Trained Staff.**

Each staff member should demonstrate the following:

1) An understanding of minorities, their culture and their problems in relating to education.

2) An understanding of handicapped and other special education populations including a general knowledge of special education laws, techniques and procedures.

3) An understanding of guidance and job placement services.

4) An understanding of vocational education laws, techniques and procedures.

IV. **Local Education Agencies Will Provide Opportunity For Staff Development or Special Needs Programs.**

This includes access to State sponsored inservice, professional association activities, university inservice courses and school sponsored workshops.

Resources

V. **The Student-Teacher Ratio In a Program With Identified Special Needs Sudents Will Be Less Than The Current Average Student-Teacher Ratio For The Program.**

The student-teacher ratio should be determined by the number and severity of the special need of the student for meeting their education objectives. Safety must be a paramount concern in the occupational instruction.

VI. **All Facilities And Equipment Will Meet The Requirements As Set Forth In Public Law 93-112 (Rehabilitation Act) Sections 503 and 504.**

This includes equal access for special needs students to all programs. Reasonable adaption of facilities and equipment to accommodate disadvantaged and handicapped students is required.

VII. **Each Occupational Education Special Needs Program Will Have Support from The Appropriate Board And Aministrators.**

The special needs program should be supplied by a board policy. Local educational agencies or boards of cooperative education services offering occupational education should have a plan for addressing the special needs population. The minimum requirements for an adequate plan must specify:

1) Processes for initial identification, referral, assessment and determination of services for students;

2) Means for required modification to facilities and equipment;

3) Requirements for personnel;

4) Fiscal implications;

5) Strategies for coordinating with other programs and agencies; and

6) Involvement of a local advisory committee.

Process

VIII. **Each Local Education Agency And Board of Cooperative Education Services Will Have A Special Process For Referring Students That May Require Special Needs Services.**

The referral procedure should include but not be limited to the following:

1) Referral coordinator designated;

2) Screening process must include: observation by qualified staff, grade review, standardized testing, parent and teacher concerns; and

3) Procedure for referring students to specific services described.

IX. **Each Local Education Agency and Board of Cooperative Education Services Will Have A Specific Process For Assessing The Occupational Eduation Needs Of Students.**

The process should include:

1) parent participation;

2) diagnostic services which may include counseling, academic

and diagnostic testing, medical and/or psychological review and staff observations;

3) determination of eligibility;

4) list of specific special needs services required; and

5) coordinating with other programs and agencies for assessment identification.

Agencies will have a policy for determining student eligibility for special needs programs and services. This policy should include a broad based participation process as well as specific criteria for placement into occupational education programs and services.

X. **Each Student Being Served Through A Special Needs Program Will Have An Individualized Occupational Training Plan.**

The training plan should be consistent with the individualized education plan developed for special education students or other agencies and specify long-range goals. The intent of the training plan is not to supplant but to supplement the existing planning processes so as to articulate occupational training services and

programs with other services being provided to students.

XI. **The Occupational Education Staff Will Be Involved In The Development Of Individualized Educational Plan For Students Served By Occupational Education.**

Special needs programs should insure that experiences offered to special needs students provides:

1) credit toward graduation;

2) modifications of the program; and

3) salable skills.

Students should not be excluded from any program based solely upon special needs status.

Individualized educational plans should be reviewed annually by the student study committee.

Further, an Individualized Occupational Education Training Plan will provide for support services including, but not limited to remedial instruction, occupational instruction in a foreign language, payment of special instructional fees and expenses and special safety modification.

XII. **Program Placement Will Be The Least Restrictive Environment For Each Student And Placement Decisions Must Be Made Based On Formal Criteria**

There should be a variety of services delivery system including cooperative education, regular classroom, special occupational education, prevocational education and support/supplemental services.

XIII. **Each Occupational Special Needs Program Will Provide Appropriate Services To Insure That Special Needs Students Can Reach Their Potential.**

These services and opportunities should be so designed as to interest the special needs students, insuring their enrollment and participation in occupational education programs.

XIV. **Each Occupational Special Needs Program Will Have A Realistic Occupational Goal.**

The program must direct its resources to assist the student to complete his/her occupational training program and to secure a wage earning job related to the training received.

XV. **Each Occupational Special Needs Program Will Have An Evaluation Component Which Provides Information Concerning The Effectiveness Of The Process And The Impact Of The Program.**

The evaluation should include graduate student follow-up, performance monitoring, student assessment and re-referral.

Outcome